

SITUATION REPORT NO. 14
INCIDENT NO. 2000-016
DATE: June 23, 2000 TIME: 3:00 p.m.

TO: Governor Edward T. Schafer
State Capitol
Bismarck, N.D. 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Flooding – Due to a series of thunderstorms since June 12 and high water tables, resulting from eight years of consecutive flooding.
2. DEATHS AND INJURIES: No change from previous reports
3. DAMAGES: A weak high pressure is expected to develop over central North Dakota today, resulting in only a slight chance of thunderstorms in eastern North Dakota. The Grand Forks Office of the National Weather Service (NWS) expects isolated thunderstorms along the South Dakota border may approach the severe limits and produce heavy rain and large hail. A University of North Dakota (UND) climatologist anticipates that an upper-level impulse responsible for western North Dakota will provide support for thunderstorm development in the eastern portion of the state late Saturday and early Sunday. Forecasts call for a potential for one-half to one inch of rain in east-central and southern North Dakota. On Thursday evening, the heaviest rainfall fell in a band from northern Cass County through Burleigh County with the heaviest rainfall – 2.5 to 3 inches – occurring in Stutsman and southern Burleigh Counties.

The wastewater plant in the city of Fargo is still treating twice the normal flow, the N.D. Department of Health reported. The extra flow is coming from a lift station that is serving the North Dakota State University (NDSU) campus. The flow did not drop as expected on Thursday and may continue until Saturday. All other water and wastewater systems have returned to normal flows. The Fargo landfill is receiving a large volume of flood debris. The landfill's leachate system and compost drainage system started operation on Thursday, and the compost is being turned twice a day to control odors.

Cass County agriculture officials estimate that 500 farms and approximately 500,000 acres were impacted by storm conditions. Preliminary estimates indicate that acreage lost includes 110,000 acres of wheat, 40,000 acres of soybeans, 6,000 acres of edible beans and 500 acres of corn.

Recent heavy rainfall has caused a slide on the embankment on the 12th Avenue interchange at I-29 in Fargo, the N.D. Department of Transportation (DOT) reported. Staff at DOT will initiate a review of the I-29 and I-94 underpass system in Fargo, where floodwaters have inundated the system three times during the past seven years. As of this morning, all highways have been restored.

Approximately 6,340,000 acres of cropland on 3,280 farms in 11 counties have been impacted by recent storm activity, the State Farm Service Agency has reported. Percent of crop losses range from 10 to 55 percent. Counties impacted by storm and rainfall damage during June 12 through June 20 are as follows: Cass, Eddy, Grand Forks, Griggs, Nelson, Pembina, Ransom, Richland, Traill, Walsh and Wells.

On June 22, flash flooding impacted roads and cropland in Pierce County during a severe storm that brought high winds, nickel- to quarter-size hail and up to 1.5 inches of rain during a 15 to 20 minute time period. Townships affected included Balta, Elverum, Girard, Rosedale and Reno Valley.

In Benson County, 12 of the 20 homes in the city of Warwick have been affected by high water tables and heavy rainfall. Sump pumps are unable to keep up with the inflow of water. The sewer system for the city of Minnewaukan continues to sustain damages caused by hydrostatic pressure from nearby Devils Lake. The ground water has been infiltrated by saline waters from the lake, resulting in calcium deposits on the city's clay tile pipes and on individual sewer services that connect to city sewer mains. Recent rainfall that ranged from three to 12 inches throughout the county left one pig farm without emergency access.

Along the shoreline of Devils Lake, high winds are causing erosion at lake crossings and roads. Ramsey County officials indicate that debris has been washing up on road inslopes, creating safety hazards. Severw bank erosion has been occurring along the Lakewood Subdivision shoreline.

Eddy County residents and business owners have been reporting water damages to basements and possible mold-related problems.

In Wells County, much cropland remains inundated, although floodwaters have been receding. Most roads have been temporarily restored to allow safe movement of vehicles.

Because of high water tables, many acres in Ransom County are still under water after heavy rainfall caused crop losses on approximately 50 farms. The County U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Emergency Board reported that percent of crop losses for 10,150 acres ranged from 20 to 80 percent for wheat, corn, soybeans, sunflowers and dry beans.

The Steele County USDA Emergency Board estimates that 8,713 acres on 100 farms were impacted by recent severe weather. Percent of loss ranges from 0.01 to 0.07 percent for soybeans, edible beans, canola, flax, corn, wheat, barley and sunflower crops.

Several private wells in Grand Forks County have been contaminated with bacteria from floodwaters. Health officials issued a news release cautioning residents against drinking from water wells until they have been tested for bacteria. They also outlined steps for ensuring safe water and locations where residents can obtain sample bottles for testing wells.

Residents in the city of Goodrich in Sheridan County reported water damage to basements. Water is also in the city park and around the county museum.

The Sheyenne River appears to have crested in Valley City, Barnes County officials report. The Baldhill Dam pool level was at 1,266.09 feet; its storage capacity is 1,266 feet. Outflows measure 2,000 cubic feet per second (cfs), and inflows measured 2,250 cfs from Cooperstown and 237 from Baldhill Creek.

4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: No change from previous reports

STATE: No change from previous reports

FEDERAL: No change from previous reports

5. VOLUNTEER ACTION: Cass County officials planned to meet this morning with volunteer and public assistance agencies to coordinate relief efforts for individuals.

The American Red Cross opened three shelters in Grand Forks and one in Fargo. Four mobile units have provided meals to flood victims and workers. Red Cross workers anticipate they will have up to 700 cases. More than 160 clean up kits have been distributed, and 750 additional kits were scheduled to arrive today. The Red Cross will be opening a service center on June 24 at the Concordia College – Grant Center/East Complex.

The Salvation Army sent three mobile canteens to the Fargo area and served 600 meals. The relief agency is providing clothing through its store to approximately 30 families of a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) unit. The Salvation Army also sent a mobile canteen to Grand Forks.

Twenty-five volunteers for the United Methodist Committee on Relief are scheduled to arrive tonight in Fargo to assist with clean up efforts.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: Based on Preliminary Damage Assessment information that is becoming available from federal, state and local teams in 18 counties and two Indian reservations, Governor Schafer today issued a statewide disaster declaration. On June 14th, he had issued an emergency declaration.

The North Dakota State Electrical Board has issued a news release advising flood victims to use caution when dealing with water-damaged electrical equipment.

The N.D. Department of Health authorized re-opening of an area at the Fargo landfill for disposal of inert flood debris such as carpet, sheetrock, wood and furniture. Staff members of the agency have been providing technical assistance with environmental health and disease control issues.

Cass County Public Health officials have asked for 500 volunteers to assist the elderly and disabled with repairs to their property. Staff also issued three news releases addressing private well water contamination, child safety after flooding and household cleanup.

Ramsey County and the city of Casselton in Cass County issued an emergency declaration.

Disaster declarations have been signed by officials for the Spirit Lake Tribe, the Benson County Commission and the city of Minnewaukan.

Pembina County Emergency Management sent a news release requesting individuals to report private property damage caused by recent storm activity.

In Sheridan County, the city of McClusky has received permission from the Bureau of Reclamation to begin pumping water from the sloughs into McClusky Canal to alleviate the city's storm drainage problems.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: No change from previous reports.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No change from previous reports.
9. OTHER: Situation Reports published by North Dakota Emergency Management are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is: <http://www.state.nd.us/dem>.

Douglas C. Friez, State Director